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China in 1974-1975: The End of an Era Aug 75 OPR 205

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Research Study

China in 1974-1975: The End of an Era?

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

DIRECTORATE OF INTELLIGENCE

OFFICE OF POLITICAL RESEARCH

August 1975

CHINA IN 1974-1975: THE END OF AN ERA?

NOTE: In the preparation of this study, the Office of Political Research consulted other offices of the Central Intelligence Agency. Their comments and suggestions were appreciated and used, but no formal attempt at coordination was undertaken. Comments would be welcomed by the author, [redacted] code 143, extension 4088.

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CONTENTS

FIGURES

PRINCIPAL JUDGMENTS

This study concludes that Mao Tse-tung's decade-long effort to establish a successor leadership dedicated to achieving his revolutionary goals has apparently ended in failure. The implications of this finding, if true, appear momentous for China's future.

It implies that, after 40 years, the era of Mao Tse-tung—an era marked by political turmoil and economic and social disruption—is drawing to a close in China. It implies a long-term shift toward relative moderation and stability in China's political, economic and social development.

This effort to revolutionize the Party leadership began with the Cultural Revolution in 1965 and continued in the anti-Confucian campaign of 1974. It ended in October of last year when Mao, confronted with the prospect of nation-wide disorder, reluctantly called for an end to the protracted period of mass struggle which he had initiated with the Cultural Revolution.

Although with implications for the national leadership, the anti-Confucian campaign was intended primarily to increase the power of Mao's revolutionary supporters at provincial and local levels of the Party. According to a high-level secret report outlining the purposes of this campaign, opponents of Mao's leadership at these levels, principally the military, were attempting to "reverse the verdicts of the Cultural Revolution." Once again it was considered necessary to mobilize the masses to "criticize and expose" bad elements in the Party apparatus who opposed Mao's revolutionary policies and programs.

The anti-Confucian campaign was intended to be a smaller, controlled version of the Cultural Revolution, but the reality of the campaign as it unfolded in the first half of 1974 was quite different. The result of the anti-Confucian campaign in a number of provinces was to revive the snarling, quarreling factions of the Cultural Revolution, intent either on retaining their positions of dominance or on seizing the dominant position from their adversaries in the local power structure.

The extent of the disorder produced by the anti-Confucian campaign in 1974 is only now being recognized in the West. In the more disrupted provinces, factional struggle (including armed struggle) paralyzed the machinery of government, with provincial leadership delegations once again called to Peking (a prominent feature of the Cultural Revolution) for long periods of "study" and "assistance" in solving their problems. Widespread social disorder (crime, corruption, hooliganism, even prostitution) and economic disorder (continued strikes, the blockage of railway transport, shortages of consumer goods and a flourishing black market) reflected a general breakdown of law and order in the most seriously affected provinces. Perhaps most alarming of all was the year-end tally of economic costs of the anti-Confucian campaign: a significant decline in steel production; a 50 percent drop in the rate of increase in industrial output (compared with the average rate since 1965); and, for the first time in many years, a reported deficit in the national budget.

The speeches delivered by China's top leaders at preparatory meetings for and at the National People's Congress in January 1975 constituted a post-mortem not only for the anti-Confucian campaign but for the Cultural Revolution as well. The central theme of these speeches was the urgent need for unity and stability. The immediate and most important purpose of the new campaign announced at the Congress to "study the theory of the dictatorship of the proletariat" was to re-establish discipline and order throughout China. The best indication of this was the decision following the Congress to use force to suppress unruly elements which continued to disrupt public order.

The enfeebled Mao Tse-tung appears still to be the central political leader in China, but the process of transition to a new, more pragmatic leadership has clearly begun. These new leaders are believed to be much more interested in transforming China into a modern, strong socialist state than in fulfilling Mao's revolutionary goals. If so, then China is indeed nearing the end of the era of Mao Tse-tung and about to begin a new era of relative moderation and stability in national development.

THE DISCUSSION

I. INTRODUCTION

"Mao Tse-tung said that his object in launching the Cultural Revolution had been to renew the leadership and to restore to the revolution the spirit that had characterized it in 1949."—Edgar Snow, Interview with Mao Tse-tung, December 1970.

"The task before us now is to find a way to regain the revolutionary motivation and ambition that we possessed in 1949 . . . and reorganize our revolutionary ranks . . . [without] . . . the great upheavals of the Cultural Revolution."—Mao Tse-tung, Speech at Enlarged Politburo Meeting, January 1975.

Political developments in China continue to perplex Western observers. Why, after several years of relative stability, was it considered necessary in early 1974 to launch another mass political campaign on the order of the Cultural Revolution—the anti-Confucian campaign—which, not surprisingly, soon resulted in widespread instability? What are the political implications of the marked physical decline of China's two top leaders, Mao Tse-tung and Chou En-lai, and conversely, the seemingly meteoric rise to the top of the second most prominent casualty of the Cultural Revolution, Teng Hsiao-ping? And why, after the decision in the fall of 1974 to restore order and, to that end, convene the long overdue National People's Congress to approve a new State Constitution, was still another mass campaign initiated which continues to the present day?

These are large questions to which, lacking a number of the relevant facts, one can provide only partial and tentative answers. The recent acquisition of a number of secret speeches and policy statements by China's top leaders throughout this period does provide important new evidence, however, for use in attempting to answer these questions.

The main conclusions of this attempt to explain recent political developments in China are: (1) that the anti-Confucian campaign was initiated by Mao Tse-tung to redress the balance of power in favor of his Leftist revolutionary supporters, primarily at provincial and local levels of the Party; (2) that although intended as a "small Cultural Revolution" (i.e. controlled), this campaign soon led in many provinces to renewed struggle between factions formed during the Cultural Revolution; (3) that disruption became so widespread that Mao in October of last year decreed an end to the era of mass struggle which had commenced with the Cultural Revolution; (4) that the National People's Congress and the revised State Constitution symbolize Mao's concurrent call in October for "unity and stability"; and (5) that the basic purpose of the new political campaign—"study the theory of the dictatorship of the proletariat"—is to re-establish discipline and order throughout China.

The most important political development in this period was Mao Tse-tung's admission, implicit in the statements cited above, that his decade-long effort to establish a successor leadership dedicated to achieving his revolutionary goals had ended in failure. The implications of this admission appear momentous for China's future. It implies that, after 40 years, the era of Mao Tse-tung is drawing to a close in China. Of greater significance, it implies a long-term shift toward relative moderation and stability in China's political, economic and social development.

II. THE ANTI-CONFUCIAN CAMPAIGN REVISITED (JANUARY-JUNE 1974)

"The problem is that . . . in some provinces . . . some comrades regard the Cultural Revolution, not as the necessary outcome of class struggles since Liberation but . . . as one big mistake. They have even composed a bit of doggerel which goes: 'The old cadres return to their positions, the new cadres go back to their units, the support-the-left troops return to their barracks, and the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution was one big mistake.' . . . This

is restoration of the old . . . an attempt to counter-attack and reverse the verdicts of the Cultural Revolution."—Wang Hung-wen, "Report to a Central Study Class," January 14, 1974.

"Chairman Mao has said: 'Confucius was a restorationist . . . [who] . . . attempted to go against the tide of history.' . . . All conservatives worship Confucius. The criticism of Lin Piao not only can be coordinated with the criticism of Confucius, but it must be so coordinated. Lin Piao is the modern-day Confucius." —Ibid.

According to a widely-held view, the anti-Confucian campaign was essentially a struggle for power at the national level in Peking, with important national issues at stake (including the succession) in the outcome of this factional struggle. This view, based in part on the precedent set by the Cultural Revolution, was credible at one time. We now have evidence, however, in the form of a high-level secret report outlining the purposes of this campaign, which supports a different view. The anti-Confucian campaign, according to this report, was initiated by Mao Tse-tung to solve leadership problems located primarily outside Peking, the most serious of which were to be found in the military.

This is not to say that the anti-Confucian campaign did not have important implications for the national leadership; that it did not exacerbate the latent tensions between Left-leaning and Right-leaning groups within the leadership in Peking; or that individual leaders at the Center were not tempted to utilize this campaign to advance their own individual or group interests. What the new evidence (combined with the wisdom of hindsight) does suggest clearly, however, is that the principal arena of conflict in the anti-Confucian campaign was located not at the Center, but rather at provincial and local levels of China's political structure.

A. The Anti-Confucian Campaign in Theory

A recently acquired secret report by Wang Hung-wen in January 1974 provides valuable new evidence for reassessing the motivation and objectives of the "criticize Lin Piao and Confucius" cam-

Lin Piao and Confucius*

This grim cartoon showing severed heads of Lin Piao and Confucius was circulated in China during the anti-Confucian campaign.

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paign—more commonly known as the anti-Confucian campaign. It was fitting that the youthful Wang Hung-wen, whom Mao Tse-tung has groomed personally as a "revolutionary successor" in the central Party apparatus (Vice-Chairman of the Central Committee), was selected to give this report, since a principal objective of the campaign was to redress the balance of power in favor of youthful Leftist cadres (Wang's counterparts) at provincial and local levels of the Party apparatus. It was also fitting that Wang should give this report since, as he undoubtedly already knew, he was to play a major role in supervising the implementation of the anti-Confucian campaign throughout 1974.

1. WANG HUNG-WEN EXPLAINS

Wang's report confirms what other senior Chinese leaders have said about the anti-Confucian campaign—that it was intended to serve both as a vindication and continuation of the Central Revolution. Just as the Cultural Revolution had been undertaken a decade earlier to deal with Rightist opposition to Mao's revolutionary program, Wang revealed that the anti-Confucian campaign was designed to deal with a new threat to Mao's policies by Rightist "revisionists" who wanted to "reverse the verdicts of the Cultural Revolution." * To counter this Rightist threat, Wang disclosed that Mao Tse-tung had recently called for the launching of a new "struggle" campaign in which the masses would once again be called upon to "criticize and expose" these "revisionist" cadres in China's Party and state apparatus. Mobilizing the masses "to air their views freely, write big character posters and hold great debates" was once again considered necessary, as it had been during the Cultural Revolution, to "ferret out" bad elements in the Party apparatus who continued to oppose Mao's revolutionary policies and programs.

Wang indicated, however, that the anti-Confucian campaign was to differ in important respects from the Cultural Revolution. Perhaps the most important difference was that the anti-Confucian campaign—in contrast with the Cultural Revolution which had been launched to deal with opposition to Mao's leadership in the "central organs" of China's political system—was addressed to a "revisionist" threat located primarily at provincial and local levels of the political apparatus. Problems had arisen at these levels (the province, district and unit levels), Wang explained, because Party leaders there had "blocked" the directives of Chairman Mao and the Central Committee, substituting instead their own "revisionist" line.

2. THE TARGETS

Although rehabilitated old Party cadres (i.e. those veteran cadres who had been deposed during the Cultural Revolution and then restored to office) figured prominently in the leadership at provincial and local levels, Wang indicated that the principal targets of the impending anti-Confucian campaign were to be military cadres still entrenched at these levels. High-ranking Army officers at the provincial level had taken the lead in disseminating such "counter-revolutionary" assessments of the Cultural Revolution as that cited above—that it had been "one big mistake." This was, in its denial of the validity of the Cultural Revolution, an attempt to "restore the old" (i.e. to return to the pre-Cultural Revolution status quo). This military-led attack on the Cultural Revolution constituted, Wang emphasized, a direct attack on Chairman Mao's leadership of the Party and government in China.

The ultimate source of this new "revisionist" threat at provincial and local levels, Wang asserted, was the reactionary and retrogressive ideology of Confucius, the Chinese philosopher who lived 2,600 years ago. The more immediate source was the influence of Lin Piao ("the modern day Confucius") as transmitted by those who continued after Lin's death to support him. The first was the ideological target of the campaign, the "conservative" thinking of large numbers of Party cadres skeptical of Mao's Cultural Revolution reforms ("We must destroy the Confucian shop in our minds"). The second was the political target of the campaign, military cadres who (as Chou En-lai subsequently pointed out) had been "deeply influenced" by Lin Piao's "Confucian teachings" and as such continued "to pose a serious threat to the Chinese Communist Party and the nation." For the Party cadres, it was largely

* "Revisionists," in the Chinese Communist lexicon, are those who oppose Mao Tse-tung's policies and programs from the Right. The terms "revisionist" and "Rightist" are generally interchangeable.

a matter of misunderstanding which could be rectified through study and self-criticism. For the military, the prognosis was more ominous—"criticism and exposure" as "sworn supporters" of Lin Piao who, out of "class hatred," continued after Lin's death to oppose Chairman Mao.

Although some were known, Wang disclosed that the identity of many of the new "revisionists" was unknown, and that, accordingly, it was necessary for those attending the study class on their return to "criticize and expose" these hidden opponents of Mao's revolution. It is this feature of the Cultural Revolution, and its continuation in the anti-Confucian campaign, which many Western observers find difficult to understand—that most of those attacked in these campaigns are not pre-targeted but rather selected by activists on the spot in response to only very general guidelines from the Center.

3. THE PRINCIPAL GUIDELINE

The principal guideline for the anti-Confucian campaign, as revealed in Wang's report, was that the "revolutionary masses" were going to be encouraged once again "to rebel against revisionism." "Revisionism" existed in all those places (provinces, cities, districts and basic-level units) where the leadership was attempting "to reverse the verdicts of the Cultural Revolution," substituting their own directives for those of Chairman Mao and the Central Committee. In the schools, these "conservatives" emphasized academic excellence rather than revolutionary commitment, thus undermining Mao's Cultural Revolution program of reforming higher education. In the factories, these "revisionists" wanted to restore the old pre-Cultural Revolution "rules and regulations," especially "material incentives," rather than relying on Mao's "revolutionary line" to "arouse the enthusiasm" of the workers. In the political structure, these Rightists, on being rehabilitated and returned to office after the Cultural Revolution, had suppressed and persecuted the Cultural Revolution rebels, thus sabotaging Mao's plan for cultivating "revolutionary successors."

In sum, the "revolutionary masses" were being mobilized once again, as they had been during the Cultural Revolution, to investigate and test the loyalty of Party leaders to Mao's revolutionary principles, only this time at provincial and local levels of the Party apparatus. The "masses" themselves were to judge whether "the orders" of these local Party committees were to be obeyed: "Those which are compatible with Marxism and Mao Tse-tung Thought should be obeyed; those which are not should be opposed." Problems which might arise as the result of implementing this principle of "conditional obedience," Wang emphasized, were not to be attributed to the masses ("The masses cannot be blamed") but rather to "the leadership." Disobedience in these circumstances, Wang implied, would be a virtue, since it would indicate those areas and units where the "revisionist" threat was most serious, raising a presumption of guilt on the part of the local leadership until a final determination could be made by the Central authorities in Peking.

Before this process could begin at provincial and local levels, however, it had first been necessary to deal with those held primarily responsible for the phenomenon of "restoration of the old" or of seeking a return to the pre-Cultural Revolution status quo. These were China's Military Region commanders whom Mao Tse-tung at a December 1973 expanded Politburo session first accused of administering the provinces under their control as "independent kingdoms" and then ordered transferred in a peremptory, almost humiliating fashion. In retrospect, it appears that Mao had three purposes in mind for undertaking this audacious move: (1) it would be possible to conduct a second, more thorough investigation and, if warranted, attack and discredit these high-ranking military officers once they had been separated from their long-held bases of power; (2) it would be possible to go after other suspected Rightists (Lin supporters) serving in the provincial Party apparatus who, deprived of the support of the Military Region commanders, could now be subjected to criticism and attack; and (3) perhaps most important, it would be possible, having neutralized the political role of the military outside of Peking, to "lift the lid" on the "mass struggle" phase of the anti-Confucian campaign.

4. A "SMALL CULTURAL REVOLUTION"

Although similar in many respects, the goals of the anti-Confucian campaign were more limited

than those of its notorious predecessor, the Cultural Revolution. Designed as a "small Cultural Revolution," the principal goal of this campaign was to apply just enough pressure (through "mass struggle") to compel leading Party officials at the provincial and basic-level to stop criticizing the Cultural Revolution, begin to carry out Cultural Revolution programs and thus return to Mao's "revolutionary" line. Not much pressure would be required, it was thought, for the great majority of these leading cadres. Most of them had experienced the rigors and hardships of the Cultural Revolution and thus were expected to succumb quickly, engage in self-criticism and make amends for past errors in conduct. By thus controlling the scope and intensity of the mass movement, it would be possible to prevent a repetition of the widespread disorder and disruption of the Cultural Revolution.

B. The Anti-Confucian Campaign in Practice

If the anti-Confucian campaign was intended to be a smaller, controlled version of the Cultural Revolution, the reality of the campaign as it unfolded in the first half of 1974 was quite different. Instead of observing the various control measures designed to maintain order and safeguard production, the "revolutionary masses" were soon engaged once again in violent factional struggle. Instead of the limited goal of "rebelling against revisionism" ("criticizing and exposing" the "dark side" of the leadership), the "masses" in many areas pursued the unlimited goal of rebelling against the leadership as a whole.

If, in an important sense, Mao intended the anti-Confucian campaign as a vindication of his role in conceiving and carrying out the Cultural Revolution, the response of the "masses" in this campaign was no less an attempt to vindicate their roles in the Cultural Revolution. The result of the anti-Confucian campaign in a number of provinces, then, was to revive the snarling, quarreling factions of the Cultural Revolution, intent either on retaining their positions of dominance or, conversely, on seizing the dominant position from their adversaries in the local power structure.

1. THE STRUGGLE FOR POWER

The basic issue over which the struggle would be waged was the distribution of power at provincial and local levels. The general aim, as manifested in Central directives to a number of provinces, was to increase the share of power held by the Left, principally the youthful revolutionary activists who had played a prominent role in the Cultural Revolution. This was to be accomplished first of all by pressing Party leaders (i.e. old Party cadres) to grant positions of real power and authority to the young cadres who had emerged during the Cultural Revolution. Second, and far more important for understanding the subsequent development of the anti-Confucian campaign, Party committees were instructed to correct "mistakes" made in the latter stages of the Cultural Revolution—that is, the mistake of attacking and suppressing as "ultra-leftists" large numbers of youthful activists whom Mao had intended to serve as "revolutionary successors" at provincial and local levels of the power structure.

This disclosure—that the Maoist leadership in Peking intended to reverse a number of the adverse verdicts handed down against young "revolutionary Leftists" in the final stage of the Cultural Revolution—was, as it turned out, an invitation to anarchy. Since the ultimate justification for the Cultural Revolution (as Mao would put it in mid-1974) was that it had been necessary to "discriminate between bad people and good," the judgment in Peking that this had been done poorly in a number of provinces would serve as a pretext for starting up the Cultural Revolution all over again.

2. YUNNAN PROVINCE: A CASE STUDY

The development of the campaign in Yunnan Province, for which we have excellent clandestine reporting, provides a good case study of the anti-Confucian campaign in practice. On one side, there was a dominant group in the provincial Party leadership composed of veteran cadres (both civilian and military) headed by the First Secretary, which wanted to "keep the lid on" the mass struggle and, to the extent possible, maintain the status quo. On the other side, there was a minority group of relatively youthful Cultural Revolution activists headed by a Secretary in the Provincial Party Committee which, conversely, wanted to "lift the lid" on the mass struggle and, to the extent possible, increase its share in the provincial power structure. The specific issue over which the struggle was

waged in Yunnan throughout 1974 was whether the dominant group had carried out a Central directive at the outset of the campaign to correct "mistakes" made in "drawing the line" between "bad people and good" in the latter stages of the Cultural Revolution.

Defined in these terms, it was not surprising that the principal actors in this struggle, as elsewhere in China, should turn out to be the factions formed during the Cultural Revolution. The strategy of the faction which had lost out in the Cultural Revolution was to magnify the nature and extent of these "mistakes," charging that its members had been subjected to torture, mass arrest and mass slaughter. Although forbidden to form such extra-Party organizations as the Red Guards or to engage in armed struggle, the youthful activists comprising this faction were clearly intended to serve as the motive force in the anti-Confucian campaign, an assignment they accepted eagerly out of a sense of grievance and a burning desire to settle accounts with their oppressors in the local power structure. As the Leftist instigators of a new revolutionary upsurge at the provincial and local level, the leaders of this faction were reported in contact, from time to time, with Wang Hung-wen (their youthful Leftist counterpart in the Central leadership in Peking) who apparently had been charged with overseeing the development of the anti-Confucian campaign in Yunnan.

The strategy of the faction which had won out in the Cultural Revolution, the coalition of rehabilitated old Party cadres and the military in effective control of Yunnan, was, while admitting publicly that mistakes had been made in "drawing the line," to minimize the nature and extent of these mistakes and, while promising to correct them (once grievances and complaints had been received and investigated), to delay taking action. Although forbidden to "suppress criticism or retaliate," this dominant faction would from time to time receive instructions from the Center which strengthened its hand. One of these, issued in late March by Teng Hsiao-ping, directed the Provincial Party Committee to bring the anti-Confucian campaign under control and warned that some elements in Yunnan, in violation of Central directives, were using the campaign as a vehicle to attack and bring down the provincial leadership as a whole.

Developments in the campaign in Yunnan, as elsewhere in China, reflected these contradictory directives from Peking which sought first to incite revolution from below (criticism and exposure of the leadership) and then to restore order from above (re-establishing Party control to prevent a recurrence of the widespread disruption of the Cultural Revolution). As disorder spread, the debate between the factions shifted to one of assigning responsibility for this disorder, with First Secretary Chou Hsing charging at a provincial Party meeting in late June that the "out" faction was responsible, since it constantly opposed and refused to carry out the decisions of provincial Party and government organs. In early October at a mass demonstration staged by the revolutionary activists, however, the Provincial Party Committee was held responsible because of its continued refusal to correct mistakes in "drawing the line" or to hand over the "black materials" (i.e. forced confessions) obtained during the Cultural Revolution. Despite a conciliatory speech to this mass meeting, the Yunnan First Secretary was then seized and held prisoner for six days until a toughly worded directive from Peking was read by the Kunming Military Region Commander ordering that Chou be released, that the meeting disband, and that all participants return immediately to their original units.

3. THE ROLE OF THE MILITARY

The return of the Kunming Military Region Commander, Wang Pi-cheng, to center stage in a political role was significant. Wang symbolized the leadership problem in the military which, as noted earlier, constituted the most important target of the anti-Confucian campaign. It was in the People's Liberation Army, as Chou En-lai had told [redacted] that the influence of Lin Piao ("the modern day Confucius") had taken "deep root" and had continued, even after "Lin and his immediate supporters" had been purged, "to pose a serious threat" to the leadership of Mao and the Chinese Communist Party. 25X1X 25X1X

Wang Pi-cheng, along with a number of other Military Region commanders, had been attacked in wall posters in May as a "sworn follower" of Lin Piao, taken into custody and sent to Peking for investigation. The results of this investigation

of Wang (and generally of the other Military Region commanders as well) were announced by Mao Tse-tung in September: (1) that although he had made "serious mistakes," he was a "good cadre" who had confessed his errors; (2) that his relationship with Lin Piao had been no more than a "working relationship"; and (3) that accordingly he should be returned to Yunnan where his presence would "improve" the situation.

There is, as yet, no completely satisfactory explanation for this marked shift toward leniency in the treatment of Wang Pi-cheng and other high-ranking military officials in mid-1974. The most dramatic explanation, in the form of unsubstantiated and highly suspect rumor, is that some sort of gesture of defiance by the Military Region commanders (e.g. refusing to attend a meeting with Chairman Mao) led to calling off the campaign against the military. Another explanation for which there is somewhat better evidence is that a "minor mutiny" in central China rang the alarm bell and produced a sudden about-face in attitude toward the military in China.

The most convincing explanation for this shift (as revealed in a Central Committee directive issued 1 July) is that the anti-Confucian campaign had gotten so badly out of hand that there was no choice but to reactivate and strengthen the instruments of dictatorship in China. A new, more urgent problem than that of sorting out the loyalties of Lin's former military associates had come to the fore—that of coping with widespread political, economic and social disorder. It was only prudent, then, to cease or at least mitigate the attack against the principal instrument of the dictatorship of the proletariat in China, the Army, which might ultimately have to be called upon to restore order.

III. THE ANTI-CONFUCIAN CAMPAIGN AND THE CULTURAL REVOLUTION: A POST-MORTEM (JULY-DECEMBER 1974)

"Since there has been . . . a Great Cultural Revolution and a Struggle to Criticize Lin Piao and Confucius, others say our Party has had internal disorder . . . But how could we discriminate bad from good without disorder, and how could we make Liu Shao-chi and Lin Piao jump out without disorder? First we disorder it and then order it."—Mao Tse-tung, Talk to "Liberated Cadres," mid-1974.

"It has been eight years since the Cultural Revolution began . . . In many places, the struggles have gone on over and over again. What is the cause of this? We must pay more attention to investigation and study . . . I think it is best now to have stability . . . [and] . . . unity in our ranks and in our thinking."—Mao Tse-tung, Speech to Expanded Politburo Session, January 1975.

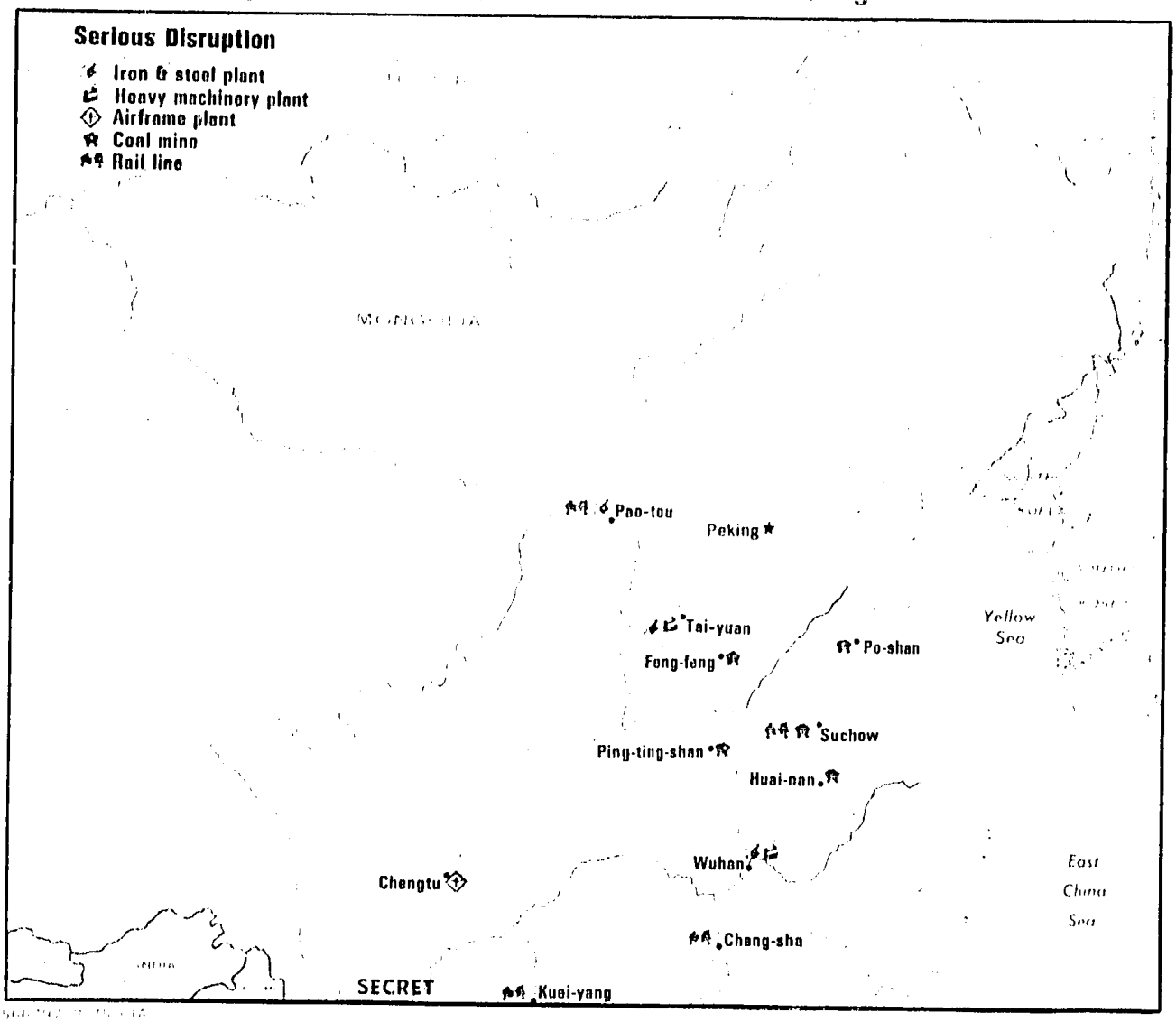
Addressing rehabilitated old Party cadres in Peking in mid-1974, Mao Tse-tung defended the disorder of the Cultural Revolution and the anti-Confucian campaign as essential for ferreting out "class enemies" and thus continuing the revolution in China. In the months that followed, disorder became so widespread, however, that Mao (first in October 1974 and then more forcefully in January 1975) was compelled to call a halt to the era of "mass struggle" which had commenced with the Cultural Revolution, calling instead for "investigation and study" as the answer to China's ideological and political problems. Determining the causes and extent of this disorder and then attempting to restore order would preoccupy the Peking leadership throughout the last six months of 1974.

In fact, a remarkably informative exposition of the problems facing China's leadership appeared at the very outset of this period in a Central Committee directive issued on 1 July. Whereas the Wang Hung-wen report in January is indispensable for understanding the unfolding of the anti-Confucian campaign in the first half of 1974, this Central Committee directive (of which we have the full text) is equally indispensable for understanding what went wrong with this campaign and what remedial steps would be taken in the second half of 1974.

A. Disorder in Industry

The most surprising disclosure in this Central Committee document was the rapidity and extent to which the anti-Confucian campaign had disrupted China's industry. A large-scale reduction in the supply of coal, the blockage of several main railway lines and internal disruption had caused many factories in the iron and steel, non-ferrous metals, chemicals and fertilizer, cement and military industries to reduce production or even stop work

Economic Disruption Caused by Anti-Confucian Campaign



completely. There had been particularly serious production shortfalls in the iron and steel and heavy machinery industries. Although compounded by problems of fuel and transportation, the "main problem" in China's industrial sector, according to this document, was internal strife within individual production units.

1. THE STRUGGLE IN FACTORIES

The origin of this struggle in China's factories can be traced to Wang Hung-wen's January 1974 report on the anti-Confucian campaign. Wang had indicated that, in the industrial sector, the campaign was directed at "conservatives" in enterprise management who wanted to restore the pre-Cultural Revolution system of "supervision, restriction and suppression" and reliance on "material incentives" to motivate China's workers. In order to prevent this, the youthful Party Vice-Chairman had then stressed that China's workers were going to be mobilized to "rebel" against these "revisionist" cadres, compelling them to confess their errors and return to Mao's revolutionary line in industry.

In explaining what had gone wrong with the anti-Confucian campaign in industry, the Central Committee directive blamed "leading cadres" (as

always) for failing to carry out the campaign properly, charging that they either had tried to protect themselves by inciting factionalism, fanning up "economism" and sabotaging production, or, conversely, had abandoned their posts out of fear of the masses ("falling without being struck at and running away without being fired upon"). In addition to these leadership failings, however, the directive went on to discuss in agitated terms certain "wrong ideas" and "wrong actions" which had arisen in the mass movement and which constituted the real reason why the "mass struggle" phase of the anti-Confucian campaign would soon be brought to a halt.

2. "THE MONSTROUS WIND OF ECONOMISM"

The principal "wrong idea," understandably distressing, was what was referred to in the directive as "the monstrous wind of economism" (i.e. the pursuit of material gain) which had blown up during the anti-Confucian campaign. That the workers (characterized as the "main force" in the campaign) led by youthful activists (presumed loyal Maoist supporters) would subvert the revolutionary principles of this campaign for their own selfish ends was "monstrous" indeed. At the same time, acknowledging that this phenomenon of "economism" was broadly based and widespread, the directive conceded that "the problems regarding labor, wages and other economic policies" were legitimate issues and as such would be taken up and resolved in the final stages of the movement.

The "wrong actions" criticized in the directive signified that the anti-Confucian campaign had gotten out of hand. The youthful activists in charge of the campaign at the basic level, instead of rebelling against the "revisionist" tendencies of the leading cadres, had "rebelled against all leadership" in industrial production. Instead of staying on the job while conducting the campaign, they had incited work stoppages, spreading the fallacy that "one should not produce for the erroneous line." Instead of observing the prohibitions in Party directives against doing so, they had left their factories to link up with workers from other production units, form mass organizations and reconstitute the warring factions of the Cultural Revolution. What had started out as a "small Cultural Revolution" (i.e. controlled) was threatening to become a full-fledged repeat performance of the Cultural Revolution.

3. THE WEAPON OF DICTATORSHIP

To prevent this from happening, the directive specified that the struggle against "leading cadres" should be de-emphasized ("they should not be arrested and beaten") and outlined a new policy of leniency toward old Party cadres which would apply generally throughout the political apparatus. This policy stipulated that veteran cadres who had "made mistakes" (later expanded to include even those who had "made serious mistakes") were, provided they made a "self-criticism," to be allowed to return to their posts. At the same time, the directive called for strict labor discipline and invoked the weapon of "dictatorship" to deal with those "class enemies . . . bad elements . . . hooligans . . . corrupt elements and speculators" who had tried both to sabotage and benefit from the anti-Confucian campaign. In this new emphasis both on order imposed from above and on searching out and punishing those held responsible for sabotaging the anti-Confucian campaign, there was an augury of the next campaign to be initiated by Mao Tse-tung in early 1975—the mass campaign to "study the theory of the dictatorship of the proletariat."

B. The Uses of History

As emphasized in the Party anniversary *People's Daily* editorial of 1 July, the time had come once again to stress Party leadership and to correct the "wrong ideas running counter to Marxism" which had arisen in the anti-Confucian campaign. These "wrong ideas," described in a June *Red Flag* article as resulting from the pursuit of "personal interest and the interests of small factions," were to be rectified by having the Party organize and train "contingents of worker, peasant and soldier theoretical workers" who would be able through "study" to acquire a better understanding of Mao's objectives in launching the campaign. The principal subject matter for study in this nation-wide effort to get the anti-Confucian campaign back on the proper track, as pointed out in the Party anniversary editorial, was "the history of the two-line struggle between the Confucian and Legalist schools in different periods over the past 2,000

years" depicted as "the historical experience of class struggle" in China.

It is important to note the purpose of this historical "study" campaign—that it was designed to reduce the intensity of the "class struggle" then under way in China by focusing attention on "class struggle" in China's past.

Although it was possible to find (as some did) allegorical allusions to present-day leaders and/or policy issues in the large number of historical articles comprising this campaign, the themes of these historical articles, with few exceptions, were presented in quite straightforward fashion. For example, a central theme of these articles (as outlined by Madame Mao in a mid-1974 speech explaining this new study campaign) was to defend China's anti-Soviet posture by singling out for commendation "Legalist" rulers throughout Chinese history who had "resisted or fought against encroachments from the North."

1. A DEBATE OVER DEFENSE SPENDING?

A case in point is the *Red Flag* article "Study 'On Salt and Iron'—Big Polemic Between the Confucian and Legalist Schools in the Middle Western Han Dynasty" which was interpreted by some in the West as reflecting a current debate over defense spending, with (presumably) the military arguing for a larger share of the budget. But the Confucianists—the surrogate for "Lin Piao and company" and thus for the military—are depicted in this historical debate as arguing for less military expenditure, allegedly because they wanted to capitulate to the enemy from "the North." And the Legalists (whose views and conduct are generally analogous with the Maoists in contemporary China) are the ones advocating greater expenditure and a larger war effort against the invading Huns. Thus, the principal policy issue addressed in this article was not the size of the military budget, but rather the validity of Mao Tse-tung's policy of inveterate hostility and intransigent opposition to the Soviet Union.

Although a secondary theme, this article was also concerned with economic policy. The Confucianist charge in this article that the salt and iron monopoly was designed to benefit the state at the expense of the people was the same charge that Lin Piao (allegedly) had made in 1971 against Mao's economic policies (in the "Outline of the '571 Project'," the so-called coup plot document). By refuting this charge at some length, it appears that another purpose of this article was to defend Mao's authoritarian economic policies and to discourage the expectation of higher wages and improved living standards (i.e. "economism") for the Chinese people.

2. A DEBATE OVER FOREIGN POLICY?

Some Western observers have found evidence in these historical articles of a continuing debate within the leadership over foreign policy. That such a debate, concerning China's relations with the Soviet Union and the United States, took place several years ago (before Lin Piao's fall) is well documented. The question, then, is whether these articles reflected a debate over foreign policy taking place in 1974.

A statement made by Chairman Mao in mid-1974 suggests that these articles refer to the foreign policy debate which occurred before Lin's death. As Mao told a group of high-ranking rehabilitated Party cadres at this time, the problem in foreign policy was not one of division but rather of over-centralization in the leadership, with too many decisions referred upwards "to me and the Premier." To solve this problem, Mao stated that in the future only "the big power" was "to be monopolized" at the Center (i.e. the setting of broad foreign policy guidelines by Mao and Chou) with "the small authority decentralized" (i.e. those lower down in the hierarchy devising the methods for implementing these policy guidelines).

It appears in retrospect, moreover, that a central issue in any current foreign policy debate—Sino-US detente—was not involved in the anti-Confucian campaign. There is no convincing evidence that any of China's top leaders opposed (as Lin Piao had done in 1971) the policy of Sino-US detente throughout this period. On the contrary, those Leftists in the top leadership whom one might assume to have been opposed (e.g. Wang Hung-wen, Madame Mao and Yao Wen-yuan) specifically endorsed this policy on several occasions during 1974. A central theme in the historical study campaign, as noted above, was the need to maintain

a "forward defense strategy" and a firm policy of resistance against invaders from the North—the fundamental premise on which China's policy of detente with the United States is based.*

3. THE STUDY OF MILITARY HISTORY

As a counterpart to this general historical study campaign, it was decided (a decision also revealed in a Central Committee directive in July) to shift the focus of the anti-Confucian campaign in the People's Liberation Army away from "criticism and exposure" of Lin Piao's military associates to "criticism of Lin Piao's bourgeois military line." By focusing on past history (much of it dealt with alleged tactical blunders by Lin during the final years of the civil war in Northeast China), it was possible to de-emphasize and phase out the struggle against Lin's alleged supporters in the Army. As subsequently explained, this new criticism campaign was aimed at strengthening unity within the Army by eliminating Lin's "pernicious influence" and was "by no means aimed at investigating the personal responsibility of individuals." In keeping with this new policy of leniency toward military leaders, it was reported reliably in early September that Li Te-sheng (a Vice-Chairman of the Central Committee who had served as Director of the General Political Department of the People's Liberation Army and whose case Chou En-lai in April had characterized as "extremely serious") had confessed his mistakes and "would be all right."

C. The Post-Mortem Begins

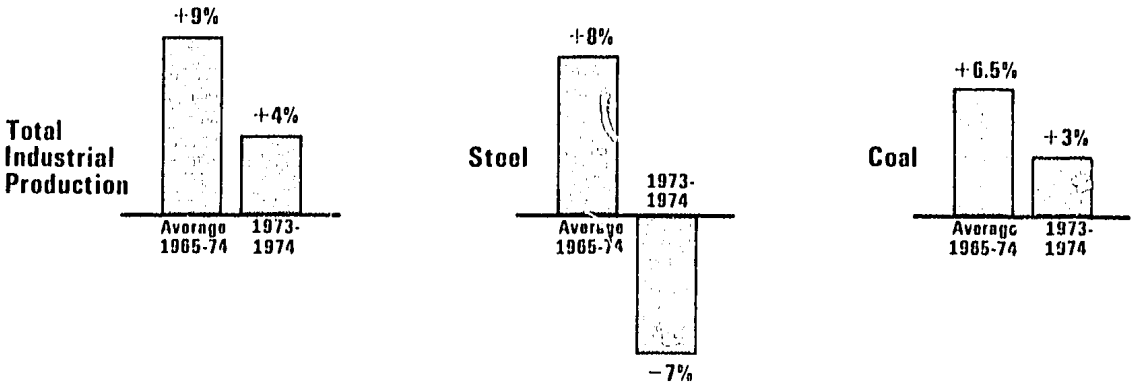
The principal reason for this shift toward leniency, as noted earlier, was growing awareness of the extent of disorder brought on by the anti-Confucian campaign. Reflecting this awareness, the 1 October National Day editorial indicated that the stage of "mass investigation" (i.e. mass struggle) of the campaign was "more or less complete" and that "main attention" thereafter should be directed to "study and criticism." Later that month Mao Tse-tung, reflecting his awareness of the extent of disorder in China, went further to call for an end to the "mass struggle" era of the Cultural Revolution, calling instead for a new era of "stability and unity." *Red Flag* articles in the final months of 1974 stressed that now was the time to emphasize unity and de-emphasize struggle, to criticize oneself rather than others ("everybody should make a self-criticism"), to obey Central Party directives calling for stability and order, and, in preparation for an impending National People's Congress, to undertake "vigorous development of the national economy."

1. THE EXTENT OF DISORDER

Despite improvement in some areas, the extent of the disorder confronting China's leadership at year's end was alarming. In the more disordered provinces, factional struggle (including armed struggle) had paralyzed the machinery of government, with provincial leadership delegations once again called to Peking (a prominent feature of the Cultural Revolution) for long periods of "study" and "assistance" in solving their problems. In the case of Chekiang, one of the most faction-ridden provinces, the First Secretary, on being directed in Peking to crack down and restore order, replied (according to a reliable report) that he was unable to do so. Widespread social disorder (crime, corruption, unruly street gangs, even prostitution) and economic disorder (continued strikes, the blockage of railway transport, shortages of consumer goods and a flourishing black market) reflected a general breakdown of law and order in the most seriously affected provinces. Perhaps most alarming of all was the year-end tally of economic costs of the anti-Confucian campaign: a significant decline in steel production; a 50 percent drop in the rate of increase in industrial output (compared with the average rate since 1965); and, for the first time in many years, a reported deficit in the national budget.

*This is not to deny that differences may exist within the leadership over the implementation of China's policy of detente with the West. For a discussion of one such issue—the issue of what attitude to take toward Western culture and the import of Western technology, see "The 'Criticize Lin Piao and Confucius' Campaign: A Case Study in Chinese Politics," OPR-202, October 1974, p. 17. That study concluded that the decision to reduce both cultural and economic imports was made at the Party Center (i.e. by Mao with at least Chou's concurrence) and that the decision was believed necessary (as Peking has explained it) to protect China's cultural, economic and political independence.

Impact of Anti-Confucian Campaign on Growth Rates in Industry



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It is understandable that the mood of China's top leadership was somber as it assembled in early January 1975 to prepare for the National People's Congress. The basic decisions concerning the new State Constitution, the government structure and the appointment and dismissal of personnel were made at an expanded Politburo session presided over by Chairman Mao in early January and then ratified, with further discussion, at a Central Committee plenum held shortly thereafter. The speeches delivered at these meetings by China's top leaders, as they surveyed political developments in China over the past decade, constituted a post-mortem not only for the anti-Confucian campaign but for the Cultural Revolution as well.

2. MAO'S PAINFUL SPEECH

Leading the way in what must have been a painful speech of self-criticism, Mao Tse-tung admitted that he had been mistaken about Lin Piao who "almost succeeded in taking over the whole Party." Although defending "the great upheavals" of the past "eight years . . . [of] . . . the Cultural Revolution" as necessary, Mao then indicated clearly that the time had come to put an end to this protracted period of struggle: "It is best now to have stability . . . socialism needs stability and the masses need stability. . . . We now need unity . . . in the Party, the government, and the military . . . [and] . . . in our thoughts." The speech, delivered by an aging Mao, was in effect a valedictory for the Cultural Revolution.

3. TENG HSIAO-PING EXPLAINS

The task of explaining what had gone wrong with the Cultural Revolution was left to Teng Hsiao-ping, now elevated to the *de facto* number three position in the leadership, primarily to assist and fill in for the ailing Premier Chou En-lai. Describing the problem of disunity in the Party as "even worse now than before the Cultural Revolution," Teng held Lin Piao (the perennial scapegoat) responsible for its failure, charging that Lin during the Cultural Revolution had intentionally "upset the class line among the cadres" and in this way had "undermined the dictatorship of the proletariat . . . [and] . . . produced grave disturbances in our society." By assigning responsibility to Lin Piao for this failure of the Cultural Revolution to distinguished between "good" and "bad" people, it was now possible to maintain that 95 percent of all cadres, both the old cadres who pre-dated the Cultural Revolution and the new cadres who had emerged during the Cultural Revolution, were "good," and by thus restoring "Party unity," restore order and "stability in our society."

Although Mao might cling to the fiction (as he did in his January Politburo speech) that "the great upheavals" of the Cultural Revolution had "disorganized the enemy and tempered the masses," the thrust of these speeches by China's top leaders (including Mao) on the eve of the National People's Congress was just the opposite. Instead of "disorgarizing the enemy," the net effect of the eight years of disorder of the Cultural Revolution

had been to disorganize the Party and in this way disorganize Chinese society. Instead of "tempering the masses," the net effect of the continued disorder of the Cultural Revolution and the anti-Confucian campaign had been to stimulate mass discontent, expressed in demands for higher wages and improved living conditions. It was on this somber note that the Fourth National People's Congress, the first to be held in a decade, was convened on 13 January 1975.

IV. THE NATIONAL PEOPLE'S CONGRESS AND THE NEW CAMPAIGN (JANUARY-JUNE 1975)

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"Chairman Mao said: '*Why did Lenin speak of exercising dictatorship over the bourgeoisie? This question must be thoroughly understood. Lack of clarity on this question will lead to revisionism. This should be made known to the whole nation.*' —Joint *People's Daily* and *Red Flag* Editors' Note, New China News Agency, 22 February 1975.

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"*Historical experience shows us that whether . . . China will turn revisionist depends on whether we can exercise all-round dictatorship over the bourgeoisie.*" —Chang Chun-chiao, "On Exercising All-round Dictatorship Over the Bourgeoisie," *Red Flag*, April 1975.

The widespread disruption of the anti-Confucian campaign by the end of 1974 dictated retreat and a concerted effort to restore order. Approving the convening of the long delayed National People's Congress, the adoption of a new State Constitution and the naming of a predominantly moderate slate of central government officials, Mao Tse-tung then called for a nation-wide "study" campaign to explain why this retreat, in the name of "unity and stability," had been necessary and to warn of the consequences ("revisionism") if the retreat was carried too far. As opposed to the Cultural Revolution and the anti-Confucian campaign, however, the primary purpose of the present mass campaign—"study the theory of the dictatorship of the proletariat"—is to re-establish discipline and order in all sectors of Chinese society.

A. The New Imperative

In secret speeches and reports at a Central Committee plenum and the National People's Congress in January, Teng Hsiao-ping and Chang Chun-chiao (the Left-leaning Cultural Revolution leader who ranks just behind Teng in the Party, government and military apparatus) explained how the new State Constitution, as well as the new government appointments approved by the Congress, reflected the new imperative for "unity and stability." To achieve "unity" in society, it was first necessary (as Teng stressed) to achieve "unity in the Party and in the Army" and this in turn depended on "unity" among "the senior cadres in our Party and the People's Liberation Army." To achieve the latter, according to Chang, it was necessary first to exonerate many high-ranking Party and military leaders who had been "falsely" charged and brought down by Lin Piao during the Cultural Revolution; and second, to apply a policy of leniency toward Lin's military associates who had been the principal target in the anti-Confucian campaign. Exemplifying this new policy toward military leaders, Li Te-sheng, the highest ranking target of the anti-Confucian campaign, was removed from his positions as Vice-Chairman of the Central Committee and Director of the General Political Department of the People's Liberation Army (having admitted to "serious mistakes" in the anti-Lin campaign) but allowed to remain as Commander of the strategic Shenyang Military Region and as a member of the Politburo.

The other goal—"stability"—was to be achieved in a variety of ways. It was to be achieved first of all, as Teng pointed out, by establishing a more stable political system (as had been the case before the Cultural Revolution) and more stable policies ("All our policies must gain the support of the masses."). It was also to be achieved, Chang revealed, by strengthening the "socialist legal system" at the expense of "socialist democracy." Although the "four big" weapons of mass struggle ("speaking out freely, airing views fully, holding great debates and writing big character posters") and the right to strike were included in the new Constitution, Chang made clear in his secret report that these instruments of "socialist democracy" would be tolerated in the future only if they contributed to "the achievement of Party leadership, the realization of unity . . . and the strengthening and consolidation of the dictatorship of the proletariat."

The overwhelming need for "stability" also explains why the new Constitution recognizes and protects such "bourgeois rights" as private plots and private ownership in the rural sector and "distribution according to work" in the economy as a whole. This was done, Chang pointed out, in order to reflect reality—both "the existing social order" and "the current economic situation." Although he made it clear that he wants to prepare the way, by means of the current nationwide ideological study campaign, for the "restriction" of these "bourgeois rights" at some time in the future, Mao Tse-tung conceded in his speech that it was necessary to protect these rights for the present.

The ambivalence in this new study campaign toward "bourgeois rights" reflects Mao Tse-tung's well-known dialectical approach to politics. As Chou En-lai, Teng and Chang have explained, the contradiction in this dialectical approach to "bourgeois rights"—both "protecting" and "restricting"—is, moreover, more apparent than real. In the short term, it is agreed that "protection" of these rights is essential to maintain stability and develop production. It is only as a long-term objective, to be realized gradually over a lengthy period of time, that reform of the present system will permit "restriction" and then finally "elimination" of these "bourgeois rights" as China approaches the final goal of Communism.

B. The New Target

Although intended in part to serve as ideological preparation for the future, a more immediate and important purpose of the new campaign is to reestablish discipline and order throughout China. To do this in a convincing manner, human targets (what the Chinese call "representative figures" or "negative examples") are required. The targets of the new campaign, the new "class enemy," have been identified, broadly speaking, as "new bourgeois elements."

The rationale for the appearance of this new type of "class enemy" was supplied by Mao Tse-tung in October of last year in his remarkable assertion [redacted] that after 25 years of socialism, Chinese society was still in many respects "capitalist" in nature—and thus capable of producing "new bourgeois elements." To document this finding, Mao instructed Yao Wen-yuan and Chang Chun-chiao (the supervisors of Party propaganda) to submit articles for his approval and subsequent publication (in the March and April issues of *Red Flag*) as the ideological underpinning for the new "study" campaign. It is to these articles, then, that we must look for a definitive discussion of the targets of this campaign, the "new bourgeoisie" over whom it was now necessary (as the title of Chang's article emphasized) to "exercise all-round dictatorship."

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As suggested by the title of Yao Wen-yuan's article ("On the Social Basis of the Lin Piao Anti-party Clique"), these new "class enemies" were to be found primarily in the economic sector of Chinese society. Whereas the anti-Confucian campaign had focused on China's reactionary cultural inheritance ("the doctrines of Confucius and Mencius") as the ultimate source of opposition to Mao's revolutionary line, the present campaign focuses on China's economic inheritance ("the old soil of capitalism") as the new source of opposition to Maoist programs. The capitalist nature of this economic base—exemplified by an eight-grade wage system, distribution according to work, exchange through money and the retention of private plots and private property—engendered "new bourgeois elements" whose conduct was motivated not by concern for the revolution but rather by concern for personal gain. The pursuit of private gain through the acquisition of money and commodities -in part legally through the exploitation of "bourgeois rights" and in part illegally through speculation, graft and corruption—and the resulting harm to China's socialist economy constitutes the principal theme of Yao's article.

Yao Wen-yuan criticizes elitist tendencies among Party and government cadres, as manifested in resistance to serving in the countryside, to the sending of relatives to rural areas and to the reform of higher education. But Yao directs his heaviest fire at elements of China's working class, especially young worker cadres who had "become lightheaded in a dazzling world of commodities, exchange by means of money, philistine flattery, sycophancy and factionalism" and had "openly broken the law." Although portrayed as deceived by "back stage abettors," this reference to "corrupted young people who have committed crimes" was clearly

directed at those young workers who, under the influence of "economism" and "factionalism," had been most responsible in 1974 for derailing the anti-Confucian campaign and producing the widespread disorder in China's economy.

C. The New Order

The most urgent problem confronting Peking in 1975 has been the need to restore order and discipline in all sectors of Chinese life. In the political sector, the institutional arrangements in the new State Constitution are designed to centralize power by subordinating government and military organizations to the Party at all levels. Within the Party, in striking contrast to the doctrine of "conditional obedience" preached by Wang Hung-wen at the outset of the anti-Confucian campaign, all members have been ordered to obey directives from the Party Center unconditionally and "without question."

In the economic sector, the same determination to restore order is exemplified by a Central Committee directive in March concerning China's railway system. This directive specified a series of extraordinary measures to guarantee the smooth running of railway transportation, with prompt and harsh punishment (including the death penalty) for those who continued to disrupt China's railway system. Strong measures have been invoked also to deal with the widespread disorder in industry (the result of strikes, absenteeism, production slowdowns and factional struggle), ranging from the imposition of labor quotas, through suspension and dismissal of recalcitrant workers, to the sending of militia units to restore order in factories long-troubled by factional conflict. According to provincial reports, remedial action has been taken to cope with such other examples of "bourgeois economic activity" in 1974 as the setting up of underground factories, underground transport, the underground contracting of labor and underground markets—examples which reveal the extent to which China's socialist economy had been disrupted by the anti-Confucian campaign.

The best indication of Peking's resolve to restore order following the National People's Congress, however, was the decision to use force to suppress unruly elements who continued to disturb public order. There are detailed accounts of the sending of armed militia into the streets to establish order in Canton and Wuhan, their duties ranging from the control of demonstrations and disturbances (inspired both by "factionalism" and the demand for higher wages) to the suppression of "street gangs." There are, in addition, reports of troop movements related to the suppression of factional disorder, with entire armies reported transferred in and out of the two most faction-ridden provinces of Chekiang and Yunnan. As the ultimate weapon for exercising all-round dictatorship, the People's Liberation Army (a number of whose principal officers only last year were the object of political attack) is once again playing an important role in the concerted effort to restore order—by force if necessary—throughout China.

D. The New Explanation

Another objective of the new "study" campaign has been to extricate Mao Tse-tung from responsibility for the disorder of the Cultural Revolution and its continuation in the anti-Confucian campaign. As spelled out in a 21 March *People's Daily* editorial, the responsibility for this disorder lay not with Chairman Mao's "important instructions" which had inspired and guided these mass campaigns, but with "leading cadres" who, because of an inadequate grasp of Marxist theory, had failed to "understand" these instructions. It is true, the editorial conceded, that this is not always easy to do: "We must not think that we can understand Chairman Mao's instructions after studying them one or two times." This tendency on the part of "high-ranking Party cadres" to "look down on theory" and thus make "empirical mistakes" in carrying out "Chairman Mao's correct line," moreover, was of long standing, extending back to 1957 when Mao first launched the struggle in China "to oppose revisionism and prevent capitalist restoration." Although a somewhat less than convincing defense of the "correctness" of Mao's instructions in the past, the editorial—in calling for "a systematic and careful" review of the political, ideological and economic problems which had arisen in recent years, especially problems concerning "economic policy"—suggested that in the interest of "unity and stability" Mao's policy line would now take a turn toward moderation.

E. The New Policy

In fact, this more moderate policy line had already been revealed in Chou En-lai's government work report to the National People's Congress, especially in the secret version of this report. In the field of literature and art (the special domain of the confirmed Leftist, Madame Mao), Chou was surprisingly blunt, asserting that "the problem before us now" is not one of "line" or "class struggle" ("the past influence of the exploiting class . . . has been basically eliminated") but rather "one of popularization"—i.e. improving the quality of production so as to attract a larger audience. In education, Chou asserted that the program of reforming higher education "has failed to take into consideration properly the needs of socialist construction" and implied that since "this is a problem which concerns our national interests" remedial steps (e.g. the opening of more institutes of higher education) would be taken soon. In the matter of simplifying government structure (a long-time concern of Chairman Mao's), Chou warned that this process must not be carried to extremes, but rather take into account, and be based on, the "needs of production."

With respect to economic policy, Chou revealed that after a decade devoted primarily to revolution, China was once again focusing its attention on economic development. The long-term goal, which Mao had set prior to the Cultural Revolution, was to transform China into a modern, strong, socialist country in 20 years. Although this was an ambitious goal, Chou made clear that China would continue to follow a policy of self-reliance in industrial development, citing as an example the method followed in the development of China's petroleum industry. This method, although criticized by some as "small, slow, inferior and expensive" (the reverse of the Great Leap Forward slogan: "more, faster, better, cheaper"), was a method, according to Chou, which "suits our current pace of industrial production." In agriculture, both Chou and Chang Chun-chiao (in his National People's Congress report on the Constitution) stressed that private plots and private ownership were essential at the present stage for the development of China's rural economy, reflecting as they did "the real economic situation."

Finally, in his discussion of foreign policy, Chou was more moderate in tone than he had been the preceding year during the anti-Confucian campaign. In discussing the principle of "proletarian internationalism," for example, the Premier did not refer, as he had done in March of 1974, to the need to support revolution abroad, substituting instead the concept of supporting the governments of Third World countries in a common struggle against superpower hegemony. The same need for flexibility, even at the expense of revolutionary principle, was revealed in Chou's discussion of China's relations with the Soviet Union (the main enemy "still trying to encircle us politically and militarily") and the United States (still pursuing "its two-China policy"). On the Taiwan issue, Chou reminded his audience that China had made "a great tactical concession . . . for the sake of international interests" (i.e. to offset the Soviet threat). And, although he did not specifically link the two, Chou's earlier discussion of the gravity of domestic problems suggested that national interest, rather than concern for revolution abroad, would continue to be the dominant consideration in Chinese foreign policy.

F. A New Era?

Some observers, noting this shift toward a more moderate policy line and the apparently meteoric rise of Teng Hsiao-ping (who had been the second most prominent casualty of the Cultural Revolution), have proclaimed the arrival of a new era in Chinese politics. With both Mao Tse-tung and Chou En-lai failing and out of public view for long periods of time, these observers interpret Teng's high visibility and strategic position at the center of the Party, government and military apparatus to mean that China has entered an era characterized by new policies and a new style of leadership—"the era of Teng Hsiao-ping." This interpretation, based on the premise that Teng has now surpassed Mao and Chou to become the most powerful leader in China, appears at the very least to be premature.

In evaluating the present relationship between Mao, Chou and Teng, it is certainly relevant to point out (what is not generally known) that Mao Tse-tung has been directly and personally responsible for the rehabilitation of Teng Hsiao-ping in a lengthy process extending over the past eight

CHINA'S TOP LEADERS: A Capsule Description

The Aging Mao Tse-tung
His health and policies failing, he presides over the end of an era.

The Youthful Wang Hung-wen
Once Mao's favorite, his present status is not clear.

The Ailing Chou En-lai
He devotes his limited energy to matters of high policy.

The Left-leaning Chang Chun-chiao
He checks and balances Teng Hsiao-ping.

The Right-leaning Teng Hsiao-ping
He manages day-to-day affairs.

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years. Beginning as early as the spring of 1967 (when Mao indicated that Teng's case was different from that of Liu Shao-chi's), this process has developed through the following stages: October 1968 (Mao tells the Central Committee that Teng is to be given a chance to reform); April 1971 (Mao lists Teng in a Central Party document as one of "ten leading comrades" to be rehabilitated); April 1973 (Mao, after approving a lengthy self-criticism by Teng Hsiao-ping which is circulated throughout the Party, reinstates Teng as Vice-Premier); December 1973 (Mao at a Politburo meeting "personally recommends" that Teng be appointed a full member of the Politburo and a "leading member" of the Military Affairs Committee); spring 1974 (Mao selects Teng to succeed Premier Chou En-lai whose health has suddenly deteriorated); and January 1975 (Mao at a Politburo meeting nominates Teng to be a Vice-Chairman of the Central Committee and Chief of Staff of the People's Liberation Army, praising him as a "good captain" and "quite practical" and therefore admirably suited "to help the Premier"—who is "not well"—in his work).

How is one to explain this seeming paradox—that Mao (who describes himself as a "center-Leftist") should have led the way in restoring Teng Hsiao-ping (a center-Rightist) to a top position of leadership in China today? In theory, this can be explained in terms of Mao's well-known belief in the efficacy of thought reform in dealing with erring comrades ("first carry out struggle and thoroughly wash away mistaken thoughts . . . second, help them correct their errors, enable them to find a way out"). A more convincing explanation is that Mao has demonstrated over the years that he values and relies upon leaders from both sides of the political spectrum—those leaning toward the Left whose strong suit is their activism and revolutionary commitment and those leaning toward the Right who excel in ability and experience. Just as he has relied upon Chou En-lai in a close, cooperative relationship extending over 40 years, so does Mao need and rely upon the "quite practical" Teng Hsiao-ping now that Chou has been forced through illness to give up his role as the chief executive in China's political system.

V. PROSPECTS

"At present, many Party members, particularly the old cadres, lack a clear understanding of the current situation. They possess the three 'ch'i' of 'discontent, grievances and indignation'."—Teng Hsiao-ping, Speech at Central Committee Plenum, January 1975.

"In the enlarged Politburo meeting [January 1975], *Chairman Mao said:* 'Now is the time to redistribute the power' . . . [But] . . . *many of our old comrades . . . stubbornly refuse to yield their power. . . . We must practice the three-in-one principle of old, middle-aged and young in our leadership."—Ibid.*

The Cultural Revolution and its continuation in the anti-Confucian campaign has resulted not, as Mao intended, in the creation of a rejuvenated Party dedicated to fulfilling his revolutionary goals, but rather in the creation of a Party more confused and divided (as Teng Hsiao-ping told the Central Committee in January) than it was before the Cultural Revolution. It is understandable that many "old cadres," the object of attack and humiliation, should view the Cultural Revolution as having been at best a waste of time, and should feel aggrieved and indignant at their treatment over the past decade. It is also not surprising that "many" of these "old comrades," having survived the attempt to depose them by force during the Cultural Revolution, are now "refusing to yield their power" voluntarily to make way for younger cadres who emerged during the Cultural Revolution.

As Mao Tse-tung (who is 81 and in failing health) reflects on the developments of the past decade, this failure to cultivate and put in positions of authority reliable "revolutionary successors" must be his greatest disappointment. In December 1970, he had told Edgar Snow that "it was wrong to judge his success in renewing the leadership—[by looking]—at the national or provincial levels" where (in a development he described as "inevitable") "many of the old cadres were back . . . [in] . . . both the Party and the administration." Rather it was the "new leadership thrown up by the Cultural Revolution at the county level—men in their twenties, thirties, forties and even fifties who would be the next generation of provincial and national

leaders"—to whom he was now looking, Mao informed Snow, for the "reliable heirs" to his revolutionary ideals.

If Mao was resigned to the return of "old cadres" to a dominant position at the national level in Peking, he tried once again in the anti-Confucian campaign to redress the balance of power in favor of youthful Cultural Revolution activists at the provincial and local levels. But this effort through "mass struggle" to increase the power and influence of Mao's revolutionary "heirs" at the provincial and local levels also failed.

It might be argued, of course, that the youthful Leftist Wang Hung-wen and the older, Left-leaning Chang Chun-chiao (members of the Standing Committee of the Politburo), and the Leftist ideologues Chiang Ching and Yao Wen-yuan (full members of the Politburo) do constitute revolutionary successors whom Mao has put in place at the very top level of the Chinese leadership. Wang is the second-ranking Vice-Chairman of the Party and one of the two senior Vice-Chairmen of the Military Affairs Committee (MAC), and Chang is probably the *de facto* Secretary-General of the Party and also an officer of the MAC.

But these Leftists are in the minority in all three of these top Party organs; and Chang Chun-chiao, the most solidly based of the four, is inferior to Teng Hsiao-ping in all three bodies, as well as in the governmental structure. Moreover, the political fortunes of Wang Hung-wen and Chiang Ching appear to have declined as a consequence of the failure of the anti-Confucian campaign. If this is true while Mao still lives, the outlook is not encouraging for this more radical contingent in China's top leadership once the source of their power and influence, Mao Tse-tung, is gone.

It might further be argued that, so long as Mao lives, there is always the chance of another shift to the Left in policy to promote revolution at the expense of order and production. After all, this has been the pattern of Chinese politics since 1949—a pattern of alternating Left-Right swings in policy as Mao has proceeded on a zig-zag course toward his revolutionary goal of a selfless, egalitarian, authentic Communist society in China. This time, however, Mao is old and sick, and a considerable period of time is needed to recover from the most recent effort (the anti-Confucian campaign) to promote Mao's revolutionary programs in China.

What is more, it is clear that, even while Mao still lives, the process of transition to a new, more pragmatic leadership has already begun. These new leaders are believed to be much more interested in transforming China into a modern, strong socialist state than in fulfilling Mao's revolutionary goals. If so, then China is indeed nearing the end of the era of Mao Tse-tung—an era marked by political turmoil and economic disruption—and about to begin a new era of relative moderation and stability in national development.